

## PROJECT TITLE

### Ventura 118 Wildlife Corridor Enhancements

Insert Location Map Below:



Project EA:24690K

PPNO:3552

**Project Location:** The project is located along the south side of State Route 118 in the vicinity of Rocky Peak Road in Ventura County.

**Co/Rte/KP/PM:** Ven/118/PM32.0

**Project Description:** To move an existing Right of Way fence on the south side of the freeway closer to the highway. The fence is currently at the toe of the slope. The adjacent area will be revegetated to provide more habitat for wildlife. A plaque dedicated to the Old Santa Susana Stagecoach Road will identify its significance as a cultural and historical resource.

**Project Scope:** Approximately 1681 m of the existing fence line will be realigned.

**Existing Funding:** IIP: \$450,000  
RIP: \$0  
Other: \$0

**Future Funding Need:** \$0

**Total Estimated Cost:** \$450,000

**Project Schedule:** June 2004- September 2005

## PROJECT INFORMATION

**Background:** State Route 118 runs east and west originating in the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles County to Saticoy in Ventura County. Rocky Peak Road runs perpendicular to the freeway just west of the Los Angeles/Ventura County line. This area is surrounded by protected park land to the north and the south of the freeway. The Santa Susana Mountains are to the north of SR-118 and the Simi Hills are to the south. The habitat adjacent to Rocky Peak Road is an integral part of an important wildlife corridor connecting the Santa Susana Mountains with the Simi Hills, San Gabriel and Santa Monica Mountain ranges. The area is surrounded by coastal sage scrub, chaparral and riparian corridors leading to the Arroyo Simi River. Animal species native to the area include mule deer, bobcats, mountain lions, coyote, gray fox and ring-tailed cats, among others. Wildlife movement in the corridor occurs through Rocky Peak Road and a tunnel located approximately 2000 feet west of Rocky Peak Road (Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, November 1999).

The Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills provide the only corridor for animals to pass between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Angeles and Los Padres National Forests. Scientists throughout the state attended a Missing Linkages conference which identified the area around Rocky Peak Road as one of the ten most important wildlife corridors in Southern California. Animals use the Corriganville

Tunnel, a nearby undercrossing, and the existing overcrossing at Rocky Peak Road as points of connectivity between the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills.

Located within the Santa Susana Mountains is the Old Stage Coach Trail. The trail represents remnants of the Old Santa Susana Stagecoach used as a main thoroughfare between Ventura and Los Angeles between 1859 and 1895. Santa Susana State Historical Park is listed on the National Register for Historic Places (1974) and is a California Point of Historical Interest (1971).

**Project Need:** . If wildlife connectivity is not maintained, populations of medium- and large-bodied animals native to the area are likely to decline. In addition, subpopulations of these animals existing in both ranges are likely to become isolated. This greatly limits genetic diversity and, in turn, threatens the health and stability of these native populations. The levels of traffic on SR-118, in addition to median, make crossing the freeway for animals almost impossible. However, due to surrounding urban developments, cumulative impacts on habitat connectivity have reduced options of crossing locations for wildlife. Wildlife have been observed jumping over Caltrans right-of-way fence in order to attempt to cross the freeway.

**Project Purpose:** Enhancement in this area is necessary in order to improve connectivity while improving safety for wildlife and the motorists. Enhancement efforts anticipated include improved fencing to replace the existing fencing, some of which is damaged and in need of repair. The fencing is also expected to be relocated in order to make it more impassable. The placement of the new fence would increase habitat within the Corriganville Regional Park existing directly south of Caltrans right-of-way and simultaneously lead animals to the Corriganville tunnel or Rocky Peak Road overcrossing for safer crossing opportunities. A plaque to commemorate the Old Stage Coach Trail is expected to be erected in honor of the

historic trail marking a great transportation  
advancement for society.